



TRAINING DAY: Merchant Marine Academy Invites Auxiliarists To Practice Skills on Simulator

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

Flotilla Commander, 18-06 (ISR) - United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



Of the many lessons that 9/11 taught, one certainly was that we are stronger when we work together than if we don't. Jurisdictions, bureaucracies and in-fighting hurt us, not help us. So, when members of the USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 18-06 were invited by Captain George Sandberg of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, also an auxiliarist, to come up to King's Point to train on the USMMA's state-of-the-art ECDIS-3000 simulator, it exemplified the inter-operability of the maritime services and made real the sentiment that no one is better than all of us together.

Captain Sandberg, head of the academy's department of Marine Transportation, and Commander Christian Hempstead (the computer guru par excellence of the USMMA) fired up a real world scenario for the lucky 13 auxiliarists who mustered for training at one p.m. on Saturday, February 3.

It was a Code Red day in New York Harbor. The author skippered a simulated USCG 108' patrol vessel, and acted as CO and on-scene commander. The other auxiliarists were assigned to six, 25' Fast Patrol Boats. These "sim" vessels were fully equipped, including radar, GPS, Automated Identification System (becoming for boats what transponders are for planes)

and digital communications.

Commander Hempstead and Captain Sandberg acted as the shore-based USCG Captain of the Port and VTS (Vessel Traffic Service - the traffic cop of New York Harbor).

The USCG Captain of the Port issued the orders, including, patrol the East River, paying special attention to the UN and all bridges; patrol the Hudson River and the New Jersey shore, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island; patrol The Kills, the Upper Bay, Staten Island, Brooklyn and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge; provide escort service for the Staten Island Ferry and for an outbound passenger vessel.

The boats were dispatched to various locations while the 108'er plied up and down the Hudson to "see and be seen," a key USCG strategy. Then the fun, as it were, began.

Men Overboard!

The simulator, under the control of Commander Hempstead, with input from Captain Sandberg, started throwing scenarios at the combined fleet.

"Vandals defacing the Little Red Lighthouse under the George Washington Bridge": Sortie a fast patrol boat and replace it with one from the Battery. "Sailboat reported late coming in": Sortie a boat into Ambrose Channel to scout. Get another 25'er under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge to inspect a commercial freighter not responding to VTS radio hailing. Then the blizzard started and a cargo freighter in the Bayonne Channel went afire and the crew started jumping overboard to avoid the flames. 25'ers scrambled down from the East River to assist in the rescue of merchant seamen in the water!

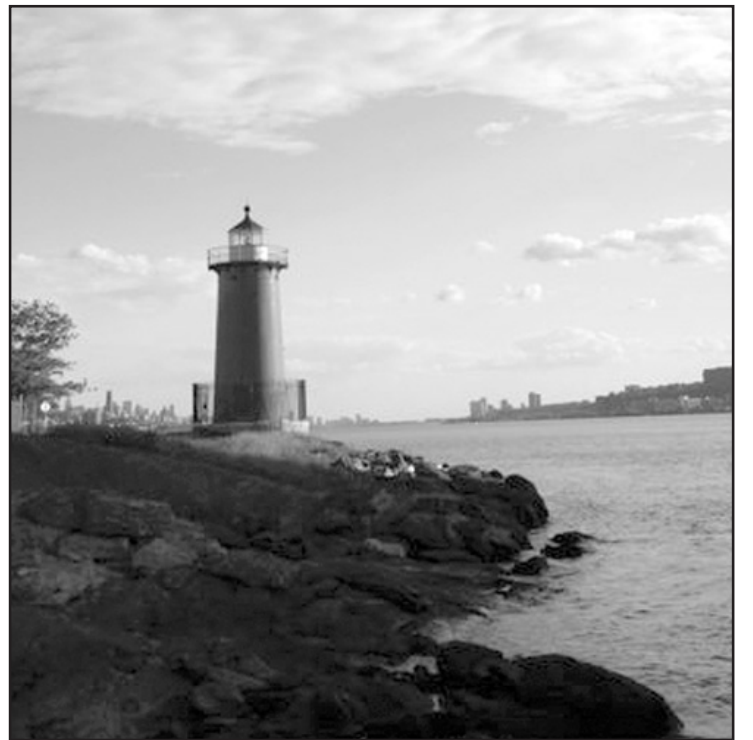


Captain George Sandberg of the United States Merchant Marine Academy made this cutting edge simulator technology available for the training of members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 18-6.

The crews (noted below) did exceptionally well. Why? Partly because the scenarios were realistic and thrown at us over the course of two hours. Mostly because the auxiliarists train together with Coast Guard regulars and reservists on the water and in the classroom when-

er possible. Auxiliarists are well trained to be a "force multiplier" for the active-duty professionals, who put it on the line every day.

The members of the fleet, operating seven "sim" boats were: Barbara Bedell of East Quogue, Louis Chrisomalis of Westhampton Beach, Anthony Frontino, Fred Furnell and George Nelson of Shirley, Kevin Osterbery of Center Moriches, Rudi and Vincent Pica of Westhampton, Marion and Greg Sarafin of Center Moriches, Al Scherback of Mastic



The Little Red Lighthouse on the Hudson River beneath the George Washington Bridge.

February 2007 - Moriches Inlet					
The Time Offsets mentioned in the column are as follows:					
Tidal Time Offsets from Moriches Inlet:	USCG Station	Potunk Point	Mastic Beach	Smith Pt Bridge	
High Tide	+45 min	+4.5 hrs	+4.5 hrs	+3 hrs	
Low Tide	+2 hrs	+5 hrs	+5 hrs	+4 hrs	
Day	High	Low	High	Low	High
Wed 07		03:39 AM / 0.24	09:58 AM / 2.53	03:50 PM / 0.17	10:34 PM / 2.64
Thu 08		04:20 AM / 0.38	10:39 AM / 2.36	04:20 PM / 0.31	11:13 PM / 2.60
Fri 09		05:09 AM / 0.51	11:23 AM / 2.21	04:58 PM / 0.45	11:56 PM / 2.58
Sat 10		06:14 AM / 0.59	12:11 PM / 2.11	05:56 PM / 0.55	
Sun 11	12:44 AM / 2.57	07:25 AM / 0.58	01:07 PM / 2.05	07:15 PM / 0.56	
Mon 12	01:41 AM / 2.61	08:29 AM / 0.47	02:12 PM / 2.07	08:24 PM / 0.46	
Tue 13	02:45 AM / 2.72	09:24 AM / 0.30	03:19 PM / 2.20	09:22 PM / 0.29	
Wed 14	03:47 AM / 2.91	10:16 AM / 0.10	04:19 PM / 2.40	10:16 PM / 0.08	
Thu 15	04:42 AM / 3.15	11:05 AM / -0.11	05:10 PM / 2.65	11:09 PM / -0.13	
Fri 16	05:31 AM / 3.37	11:52 AM / -0.32	05:57 PM / 2.90		
Sat 17		12:00 AM / -0.31	06:17 AM / 3.52	12:37 PM / -0.49	06:42 PM / 3.12
Sun 18		12:50 AM / -0.44	07:03 AM / 3.58	01:21 PM / -0.60	07:28 PM / 3.28
Mon 19		01:39 AM / -0.50	07:49 AM / 3.52	02:03 PM / -0.64	08:16 PM / 3.37
Tue 20		02:27 AM / -0.47	08:38 AM / 3.37	02:46 PM / -0.57	09:06 PM / 3.39

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Beach, Joe Tarlantino of Moriches and Ed Tordahl of Mastic. Six 25' Fast Patrol boats and a 108' USCG cutter is a lot of firepower, computer power and man and woman power!

Was it fun? Absolutely. Was it sobering to think about what we were training for. Absolutely. Is it necessary? Absolutely. "They" have to be lucky, just once. We have to be perfect every day. If you are interested in being part of this team, Email me at USCGAUX2006@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."